

PARTICIPATION IN JANIS

As I understand it, there is considerable ferment as to what the new intelligence agency will do. The prevailing stand of many is that it shall be a policy studying group preparing high level data on foreign capabilities and intentions. It will work on problems. With this I have no disagreement (I like to work on problems). However, the branch will be a research organization and must have facts to use in solving these problems. Some of these facts may be quite detailed. Only by skillful use of all facts will the end product be superior to ordinary newspaper or magazine presentations. For example, if it were proposed to separate Hongkong Island from the mainland, the fact that the water supply comes from the mainland is relevant.

Frequently there is not time to gather all relevant facts to solve a problem. For this reason basic background data should be available. It is not enough to have these data in files; they must be evaluated, reconciled, and written up. In this fashion worthwhile data are made available and personnel kept on their toes. The information thus organized (in country handbooks or some other fashion superior to previous ONI monographs or G-2 Strategic Surveys and less detailed than some parts of a JANIS) provides basic data for use in solving problems quickly. Furthermore, if disseminated they may enable many operating or policy groups to make sound decisions when they do not even have sufficient time to request a study.

It may be argued that for many countries there is already sufficient handbook data prepared. On Argentina for example, G-2 has a strategic survey almost completed; ONI has monograph material and the R & A Branch has a long study in press. Yet, I will wager that each of these studies has conflicting statements, since I know they did not consult each other. For this reason even a JANIS on Argentina appears justified. This statement merely bears out conclusions reached by Joint Chiefs of Staff committees several years ago, prior to formation of JANIS.

It is impossible for me to make definite recommendations at this time when the future policy, budgets and caliber of personnel of IRIS and the other intelligence agencies are so uncertain. The service agencies will continue JANIS whether we participate or not. Within six months, however, they may be so decimated that JANIS will lapse. In this case IRIS might inherit the task. After the last war I understand State and Commerce, as civilian agencies were the only outfits capable of continuing intelligence because of cuts in the military.

In order to provide facts possibly relevant for a decision at this time, I have repeated and enumerated some reasons below for and against continuance of our participation in JANIS, as well as listed a few tentative conclusions.

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A. Arguments in Favor of Continued Participation in JANIS.

1. JANIS is a going concern and has prestige. It is the standard geographical reference work on foreign areas. Over twenty five studies have been completed covering most of the Far East. In the words of Admiral Sherman, Chief of Staff, Pacific Ocean Areas, "JANIS is the indispensable reference work for the shore-based planner". Although twenty five hundred copies are printed, demand has exceeded supply in many areas, particularly Japan. On Korea, for example, four thousand extra copies of Chapter I, Brief, have been requested by General MacArthur for use of American Forces there. The basic JANIS has been copied and recopied through all echelons in the armed forces. The Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Areas, changed its filing system to conform to JANIS and kept files only on current information on areas covered by JANIS. Still other examples could be cited, although no one on this board has been privileged to go into the field to check customer reaction.

2. JANIS is primarily a basic geographic-economic-political handbook on foreign areas, and although written primarily to provide static data for war planners, is used by a variety of other customers including such diverse agencies as Civil Affairs, White House Map Room, State Department, Commerce, Federal Power Commission, Judge Advocate, Army-Navy Liquidation Commission, Civilian Supply Division of the Quartermaster, Maritime Commission and a host of others too numerous to mention. In many instances, the above agencies and others such as UNRRA have requested JANIS, but war-time security classifications or lack of copies have prevented fulfillment of the requests.

3. The need for joint intelligence after the war will continue. In spite of rush production, JANIS does reconcile many conflicting statements to give a joint body of facts on which to base estimates.

4. Through the medium of JANIS, OSS had ready access to such intelligence data that it would not otherwise have obtained. This cooperation made the OSS task easier and presumably will operate in the future.

5. The JANIS outline is being revised to fit peacetime needs; for over a month the Far East Division has been working on suggestions for revising the outlines of its chapters. In other words the OSS chapters can be written as desired by the agency, the only criterion being to produce a decent product.

6. In the future, only six studies a year will be prepared in contrast to twelve or more and rigid deadlines will not be imposed. The studies will not be concentrated in one division and should provide a backlog of continuing work for the sections involved, although it is recognized that some sort of not too onerous deadlines will be desirable.

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7. OSS is responsible for chapters in which it has a specialized interest, contributing chapters on Cities and Towns, Resources and Trade, Transportation, and People and Government. In addition it has specialized still further in these topics as a result of the division of work that has gone on for two years in the preparation of JANIS and Joint Topographical Subcommittee reports. The whole JANIS will be poorer if the branch does not prepare these chapters inasmuch as no one else is equipped to handle all of the task; furthermore OSS and its trained editors have been the main factor in keeping the content standard of JANIS as high as it has been. Finally if other agencies prepare some chapters such research, even though imperfect, will be of some benefit to IRIS since it will not have to be done by ourselves; some of this research will be better than we can afford to do inasmuch as even now our contributions are not perfect.

8. Background information will continue to be required to meet spot requests. JANIS can fill this need, although JANIS may provide only about 50 per cent of the requirements for this background intelligence. The deadlines on policy and capability studies generally do not permit extensive research to answer the requests.

9. If IRIS drops out of JANIS, it would also probably have to drop out of the Joint Topographical Subcommittee and lose the benefits of cooperation in that broad field.

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B. Arguments Against Participation.

1. Although OSS has played a major role in shaping the content of JANIS, and has contributed more than any other agency to its success, it cannot control the publication inasmuch as it is a joint enterprise. This may be an even more serious defect in the future when the military services are reduced in size and quality. In the past a fair minded chairman helped because he did not favor one service. Even now OSS contributes more trained personnel to the board than any other agency and has to use much of it in rewriting poor contributions from some of the services. The greatest weakness of the Joint Topographical Subcommittee (which gives operating direction on policy matters to this board) has lain in its ignorance of who was good and who was bad and the consequent impossibility of improving specific weak contributors. The whole joint endeavor has suffered as a result and an unfair burden placed on an organization such as OSS.

2. In spite of OSS carrying a greater load than any other contributor, the studies have been known primarily as Joint Chiefs of Staff and Army-Navy publications. The name Joint Army Navy Intelligence Study would probably be unacceptable to the State Department.

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3. In addition to lack of control over contributors, OSS lacked control over priorities for studies and, in spite of vehement protests of the JANIS Board, studies were assigned for preparation in the early stages that should never have had time wasted on them. More recently priorities have been reasonable and in the future probably will also be, as witness the three (Argentina, Central China, European USSR) for the first half of 1946. Even though new deadlines are not rigid, IRIS may be so short handed that it cannot afford to meet a joint commitment.

C. Conclusions.

1. Some systematic background studies of key foreign areas should be prepared by a research agency and published in some form.

2. Such studies should be prepared to meet peace-time needs with their use for a possible future war merely an added increment not to be counted on at the present time. During war the national interest in enemy territory is almost purely military. In peace the national interest in foreign areas is first a civilian interest. JANIS can readily be adapted to meet this changed interest inasmuch as even now it is primarily a handbook on foreign areas letting the areas speak for themselves.

3. If JANIS continues and IRIS participates, high quality, worthwhile studies should be prepared. Otherwise it has little excuse for existence. Such country handbooks should not be mere descriptions or encyclopedias. Rather, they should be carefully organized, properly weighted presentations of facts and conclusions on foreign areas so that a sound, balanced picture and comparison with Areas results. (On Siberia for example, one should not make sweeping statements and present averages for the whole area, as was done in a recent JANIS contribution, but one should sharply distinguish between a band of development along the Trans-Siberian Railway on the south and the almost total absence of development, save for one or two spots, in the rest of the area).


4. Ideally such studies should be controlled by IRIS with some sections farmed out to scholars in universities and other government departments, both civilian and military, according to the caliber of work the agencies are capable of producing. Any large scale farming out of work to other government agencies would require them to improve their staff, something they may wish to do because of increased emphasis on foreign areas.

5. If IRIS drops out of JANIS it may cut itself off from cooperation and information available in the service agencies; this information may not be extensive in the future, although a basic backlog is now available and apparently is flowing back from the theaters.

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6. If IRIS continues to participate the name of the study should be changed. I suggest that the short title JANIS be kept because of its prestige and the long title changed to JOINT INTELLIGENCE STUDY, omitting the words Army-Navy.

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